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TAGS: [MASS](#) [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [XL](#)
SUBJECT: USS FARRAGUT ANCHORS OUTREACH EVENTS IN ST. LUCIA

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires D. Brent Hardt, reasons 1.4 (b and d)

Summary

[11](#). (C) A three-day port call by the USS Farragut formed an ideal platform for community outreach events by the Ambassador and the Farragut's crew, and afforded an opportunity to engage with regional prime ministers who were in town for an OECS heads of government meeting. While a promised Article 98 signing was unexpectedly delayed, the Ambassador received renewed assurances from St. Lucian Prime Minister King that it would be done. The Ambassador was also informed that the EPA would be signed October 15, and that OECS leaders would formally endorse Trinidad Prime Minister Manning's integration proposal at a heads of government meeting October 23. End summary.

AMBASSADOR, FARRAGUT CREW REACH OUT IN ST. LUCIA

[12](#). (U) During a September 10-12 visit to St. Lucia, the Ambassador and crew members of the USS Farragut conducted a series of community outreach activities including the handover of toys and children's products at a local primary school and the rehabilitation of secondary schools in two different locations on the island. The Ambassador donated to the Holy Family Children's Home an honorarium check she received from New York-based Monroe College for speaking at their commencement earlier this year. The Ambassador also presented an award and PAO-supplied library books to a local high school student who had placed third in a regional Embassy-sponsored essay contest on the U.S. elections. The audiences at all locations were uniformly exuberant and grateful for U.S. assistance, generating excellent word-of-mouth coverage. While local press was typically lethargic, PD followed up the event with a barrage of press releases, which received good local distribution.

[13](#). (U) The highlight of the Farragut's port call was a reception co-hosted by the Ambassador and PM King under the hospitality of the Farragut's commanding officer. Several members of cabinet, members of the diplomatic corps, and the speaker of parliament attended, along with PM Denzil Douglas of St. Kitts and the visiting premier of Montserrat, both of whom were in town for an OECS heads of government meeting. Unfortunately, the planned keystone of the reception, a public signing of an Article 98 agreement between the U.S. and St. Lucia, was unable to take place after PM King failed to motivate his legal advisors to finalize talks on the text in time for the event. Progress on the text was made during the day, however, and the Embassy is working with Washington agencies and St. Lucian counterparts to try to finalize the agreement.

SHOP TALK: REGIONAL POLITICS

14. (C) The reception, as well as side meetings with senior regional political contacts during the visit, provided fertile ground for insights into local and regional political developments. The OECS heads of government meeting was focused on Trinidad PM Manning's regional integration initiative, which appeared to have been warmly received by all the OECS prime ministers with whom we spoke, including Tilman Thomas of Grenada and Ralph Gonsalves of St. Vincent. PM King told Emboffs the OECS is set to formally endorse the proposal, most likely at an October 23 heads of government meeting. Likewise, King assured Emboffs the Economic Partnership Agreement with the EU would be signed, most likely on October 15. The PM (somewhat disingenuously) expressed surprise that the Article 98 was unable to be signed, but said his government is still committed to concluding the agreement.

15. (C) Also at the reception, Tourism Minister Alan Chastanet outlined St. Lucia's ambitious plans to redevelop its harbor and downtown area to permit the arrival of the new line of mega cruise ships. The scope of the project outlined came as a surprise, and Chastanet was vague on where the funds would come from. Chastanet indicated that the success of these plans was integrally linked to the political fortunes of PM King, who he noted needed to take some key steps in the coming weeks to assert his authority within the cabinet if St. Lucia - and his government - were to move forward politically and economically. Prime Minister Denzil Douglas of St. Kitts, who had just returned from the defense ministerial in Banff, Canada, expressed appreciation for the opportunity to bring the region's security concerns to the fore with senior DoD officials. He said the region looked forward to working with us to develop a common security agenda.

COMMENT

16. (C) PM King's inability to deliver on the Article 98 in timely fashion was disappointing, but does not appear to hint at any change of heart on his or his government's part. It is instead equal parts the pace of Caribbean bureaucracy and King's mettle as a leader -- he does not appear to have engaged anyone in his cabinet on this at any point, and it was only a barrage of calls to MFA Permsec Severin and Emboffs literally camping out in the MFA legal offices that resulted in movement on the talks. King was, in fairness, effusive in his thanks and praise for the Ambassador, the Farragut, and the attention the USG has paid to St. Lucia recently. This seems heartfelt. King is friendly to our interests, but it remains to be seen if he will take the leadership to parlay that personal commitment into national action. His next opportunity will be at UNGA, where he has personally promised the Ambassador a thorough review of St. Lucia's voting record on, inter alia, human rights issues.
HARDT